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Atty. Dkt. No. 040679-1420

## IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Akira KONDOU et al.

Title: STEERING SHAFT FOR ENERGY ABSORBING STEERING COLUMN AND  
MANUFACTURING METHOD THEREOF

Appl. No.: 10/023,795

Filing Date: 12/21/2001

Examiner: Unassigned

Art Unit: Unassigned

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT  
UNDER 37 CFR §1.56Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Submitted herewith on Form PTO-1449 is a listing of documents known to Applicants in order to comply with Applicants' duty of disclosure pursuant to 37 CFR §1.56. A copy of each listed document is being submitted to comply with the provisions of 37 CFR §1.97 and §1.98.

The submission of any document herewith, which is not a statutory bar, is not intended as an admission that such document constitutes prior art against the claims of the present application or that such document is considered material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR §1.56(b). Applicants do not waive any rights to take any action which would be appropriate to antedate or otherwise remove as a competent reference any document which is determined to be a *prima facie* art reference against the claims of the present application.

**TIMING OF THE DISCLOSURE**

The listed documents are being submitted in compliance with 37 CFR §1.97(b), within three (3) months of the filing date of the application.

**RELEVANCE OF EACH DOCUMENT**

Document A1 relates to a steering shaft.

Document A2 relates to a shock absorbing steering shaft.

Document A3 relates to a steering shaft for automobiles or the like and manufacturing method thereof.

Document A4 relates to a shock (impact) absorbing steering shaft.

English translations of the foreign-language documents are not readily available. However, the absence of such translations does not relieve the PTO from its duty to consider the submitted foreign language documents (37 CFR §1.98 and MPEP §609).

Applicants respectfully request that any listed document be considered by the Examiner and be made of record in the present application and that an initialed copy of Form PTO-1449 be returned in accordance with MPEP §609.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit-Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: March 12, 2002

By *Richard L. Schwaab*

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